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• scattered about the house

**7. adverb preposition**

in different directions: from place to place in different directions or in no particular direction • *children running about everywhere*

**8. adverb**

in circulation: available or in circulation

• *there was never much money about*

**9. adverb**

into a reversed position: in or to the opposite direction • *the wrong way about*

**10. adverb**

all around: on every side of or all the way around "He proceeded to the banks of the Hudson, and looked about among the vessels." Jules Verne *Around the World in 80 Days* (1873)

**11. adverb**

used as intensifier: used to emphasize a statement, usually when expressing impatience or anger (*informal*) • *Well, it's about time you showed up!*

**12. adverb**

NAUTICAL to opposite tack: on or to the opposite tack

[Old English *onbutan* "on or around the outside of," from *on* (see on) + *butan* (see but)]

**be about to** to be on the point of doing something • *The game was about to start.*

**be what something or somebody is (all) about** to be what something or somebody involves or has as a purpose (*informal*)

**not about to** used to emphasize that somebody is certainly not going to do something (*informal*) • *I'm not about to apologize!*

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un-abridged \ən-ə'brijəd  
*adj* : being the most complete  
in its class

The dictionary  
is just the  
beginning.

## Merriam-Webster's COLLEGIATE® DICTIONARY

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The dictio  
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Find ou  
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3 entries found for **about**.

To select an entry, click on it. (Click 'Go' if nothing happens.)

about[1,adverb]  
about[2,preposition]  
about[3,adjective]



Main Entry: **1 about**

Pronunciation: *ə-'baut*

Function: *adverb*

Etymology: Middle English, from Old English *abutan*, from *1a-* + *butan* outside — more at BUT

Date: before 12th century

**1 a** : reasonably close to <*about* a year ago> **b** : ALMOST <*about* starved> **c** : on the verge of -- usually used with *be* and a following infinitive <*is about* to join the army> -- used with a negative to express intention or determination <*not about* to quit>

**2** : on all sides : AROUND

**3 a** : in rotation **b** : around the outside

**4** : HERE AND THERE

**5** : in the vicinity : NEAR

**6** : in succession : ALTERNATELY <*turn about* is fair play>

**7** : in the opposite direction <*face about*> <*the other way about*>

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**ASK ME**  
**about**

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\&\ as e in kitten  
\&\ as ur/er in further  
\&\ as a in ash  
\&\ as a in ace  
\&\ as o in mop  
\&\ as ou in out  
\&\ as ch in chin

### Pronunciation Symbols

\e\ as e in bet  
\e\ as ea in easy  
\g\ as g in go  
\i\ as i in hit  
\i\ as i in ice  
\i\ as j in job  
\ng\ as ng in sing  
\o\ as o in go  
\o\ as aw in law  
\o\ as oy in boy  
\th\ as th in thin  
\th\ as th in the  
\u\ as oo in foot  
\u\ as oo in foot  
\y\ as y in yet  
\zh\ as si in vision

For more information see the [Guide To Pronunciation](#).

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